

# The Case for Atlantis in Antarctica

*After detailed analysis of ancient maps and Plato's writings, researcher Rand Flem-Ath concludes that Antarctica is the site of the fabled lost continent of Atlantis.*

## Part 1

by Rand Flem-Ath

Extracted and edited from a transcript of his lecture, "Atlantis and the Earth's Shifting Crust", presented at Return to the Source Symposium, held at the University of Delaware, USA, 28 September 1996

**W**e all know that the greater mass of an iceberg is hidden, unseen beneath the surface of the water. And likewise, underlying the search for Atlantis lie many deep prejudices. Some of these prejudices revolve around time. Our twentieth-century faith in progress propels us towards the future, leaving the past behind at a constantly accelerating rate. But here, at the Return to the Source Symposium, we are invited to face the past. This event is an opportunity to turn to the past for knowledge and perhaps even some wisdom.

I believe that Plato's famous account of Atlantis is a holographic fragment, a sliver of a once common view of the world. In order to reconstruct that world-view we must revise our own assumptions about geography. Words like "Atlantic", "Libya" and "Asia" had a different meaning to the ancient Greeks than they do to us today. When we realise this, Plato's account of Atlantis can be read without distortion and we can follow his clues to their logical conclusion. But in order to understand this Atlantean world-view, we need to reconsider our own presuppositions about geography.

Figure 1 shows a map of the Earth centred on North America, and although you may not have seen this particular projection before, the world is still recognisable; it doesn't challenge any of our current beliefs. North is "up" as it is always traditionally depicted. I should say here that this only a tradition—there is no such thing as "up" when the Earth is seen from outer space. Notice how the "north is up" perspective causes the oceans to appear as distinctive bodies of water. The Pacific and Atlantic seem to be entirely separate oceans. This "north is up" viewpoint also highlights the separateness of the continents.

Now, in figure 2, you see a map of the world showing south in the "up" position. Plato's account of Atlantis places the lost continent in what he calls the "real ocean", and we can see what he meant in this US Navy projection of the world as seen from Antarctica. Notice how all the "oceans" that we know today—the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific—are really one ocean. This is a geographic fact—as is recorded in Plato's account of Atlantis.

Plato expands on this description to say that the Mediterranean Sea is merely a basin of the ocean, separated from it by a narrow channel. From this perspective it is certainly accurate to say that the Mediterranean Sea is really a part of the "World Ocean", separated from it by a narrow entrance at the place we call the Strait of Gibraltar. Seen from Antarctica, the rest of the continents form a ring around the "real ocean". Plato talks about "the whole opposite continent"—a phrase that makes sense once we view the world from Antarctica. This "whole opposite continent" has not been understood before. Most researchers into Atlantis treat it as gibberish or they imagine that it must refer to America.

Plato acquired the record of Atlantis from his ancestor Solon. In Solon's time, the Earth-island was divided politically into Europe, Libya and Asia (see figure 3). "Libya" included all of North Africa. "Asia" was an area which covered what we would call "the Middle East". I will be returning to the size of Libya and Asia in a moment, but I want you to notice that surrounding this Earth-island was a vast ocean that the Greeks called "the Atlantic". This body of water circled the Earth-disc. Most researchers have mistaken "the Atlantic" to be the North Atlantic Ocean, but for the Greeks of Solon's time the Atlantic was a body of water that completely encircled the world. It lay to the west, yes, but it also lay to east, north and south. So in its true historic sense, the Atlantic was a much larger body of water than just the North Atlantic.

At the westerly extreme of the ancient Greek world were the "Pillars of Heracles"—what we know today as the Strait of Gibraltar. It is a narrow entrance which separates the

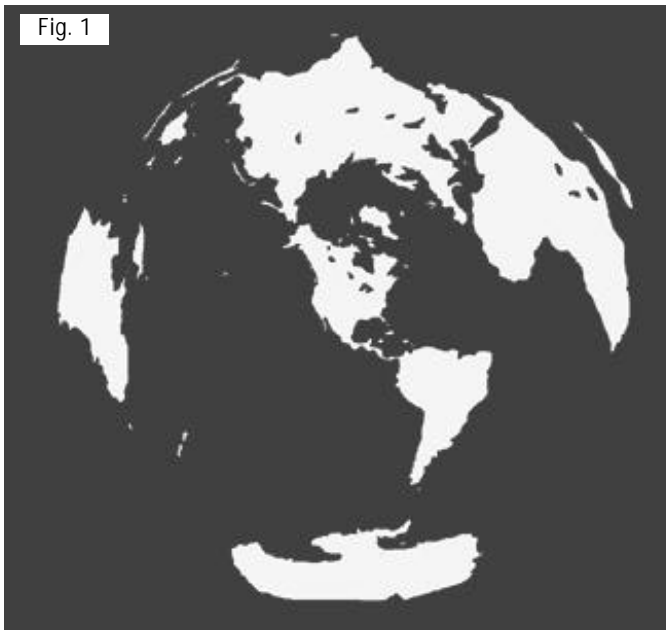


Fig. 1

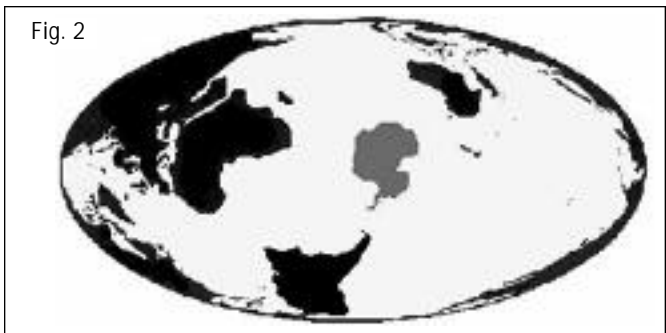


Fig. 2

Mediterranean Sea from the outer ocean. The Pillars of Heracles were the limit of the known world to the Greeks of Solon's time. Land which lay outside this channel was unknown to them.

Plato describes Atlantis as a mountainous, high-altitude island larger than Libya and Asia combined. That would make it slightly larger than the lower forty-eight American states.

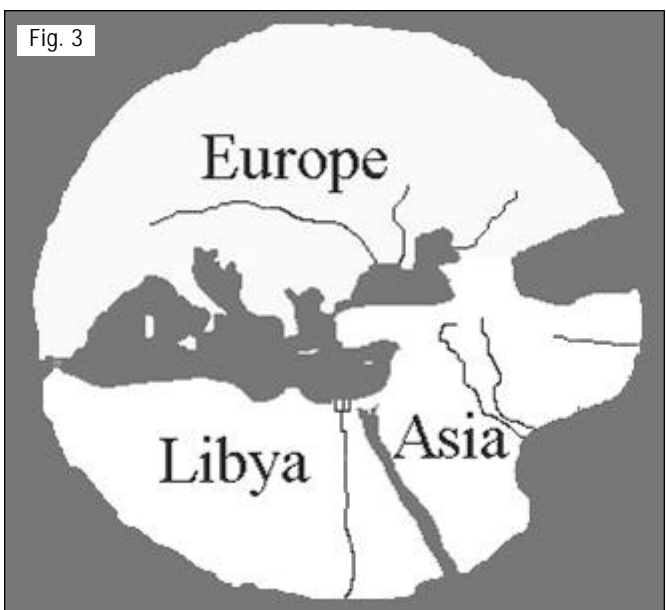


Fig. 3

Antarctica, like Libya and Asia, is slightly larger than the US. I have separated Lesser Antarctica from Greater Antarctica (see figure 4) because I want to treat these areas separately later on.

The mere fact that Plato tells us that the Earth contains a vast island continent the size of Antarctica is amazing in itself. He goes on to give us a most interesting clue. He says that the whole island-continent is high above sea-level. And this is true about...Antarctica! As you can see from figure 5, Antarctica is by far the highest-altitude continent on our planet.

The Egyptian priest spoke to Solon about Atlantis in terms he could understand. He passed on the account as an Atlantean would who was describing his home from the shores of the lost continent before its destruction around 9,600 BC.

In figure 6 we see the world as it would have looked from Atlantis. The ocean level is lower (as it was nearly 12,000 years ago), joining England to Europe and Japan to Asia. Lesser Antarctica is depicted in its former ice-free state. Notice the accompanying islands. Here are Plato's words:

*...island outside the channel which your countrymen tell me you call the 'Pillars of Heracles'. This island was larger than*



Fig. 4

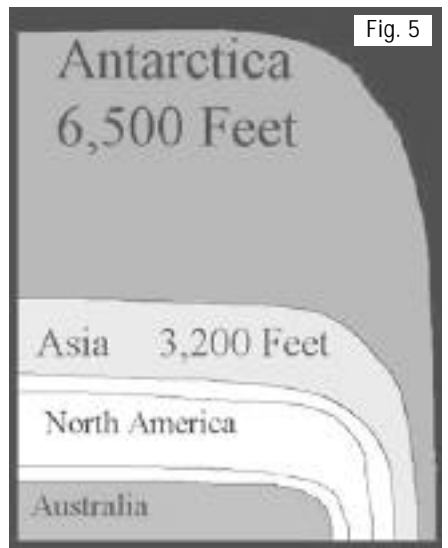
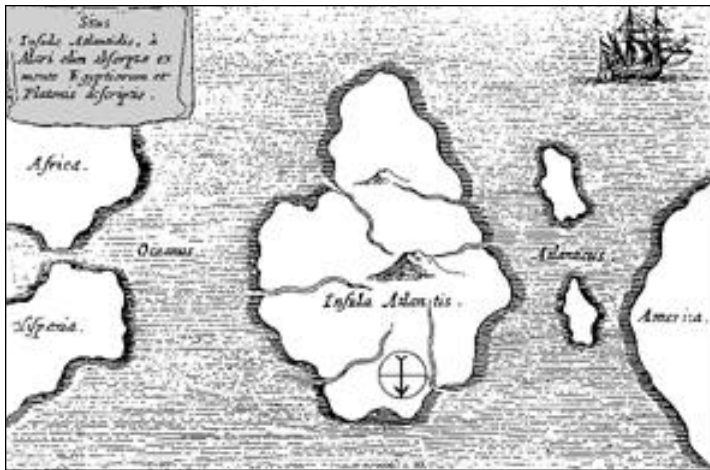


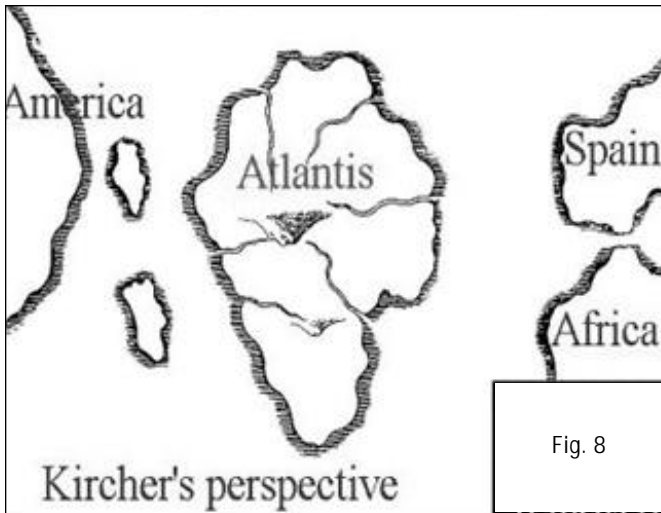
Fig. 5



Fig. 6



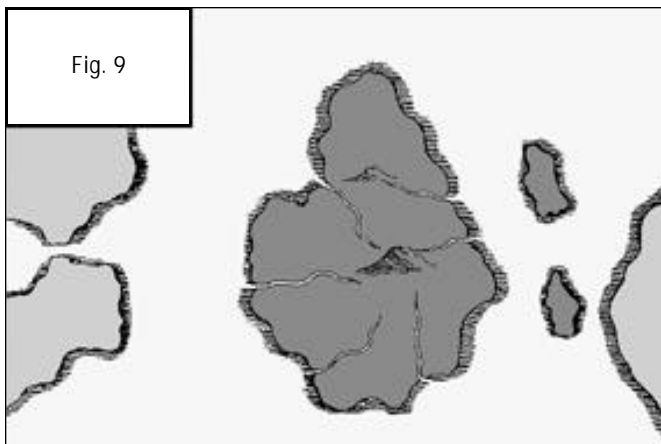
*Libya and Asia together, and, from it, seafarers in those times could make their way to the others (islands) and thence to the whole opposite continent which encircles the true outer ocean. (The waters within the channel just mentioned are*



*manifestly a basin with a narrow entrance; what lies beyond it is the real ocean, and it is land enclosing the ocean which should rightly be called a continent.)*

Plato's account is not just a figment of his imagination; it is a fragment from a lost world.

Now I've spent a lot of time on Plato because I don't believe his contribution to lost knowledge is fully appreciated, but he is not



the only source that points to Antarctica as the location of Atlantis.

In 1665, the German Jesuit priest Athanasius Kircher published *Mundus Subterraneus*, a massive book which includes a reproduction of an ancient Egyptian map of Atlantis. The map had been stolen from Egypt by the Romans, probably after the fall of Cleopatra.

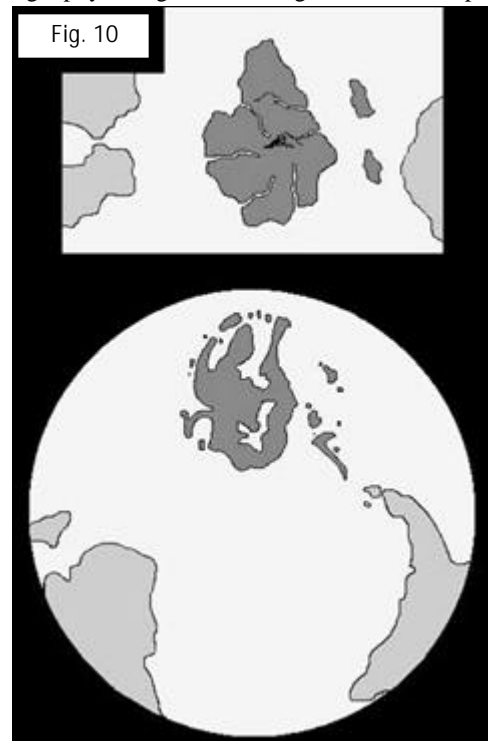
Now when the map in figure 7 came into Kircher's hands, he didn't possess an accurate globe with which he might compare it. Let's first look at the map as he saw it. The label in Latin translates to "Site of Atlantis, now beneath the sea, according to the beliefs of the Egyptians and the description of Plato".

The Egyptians believed that south, not north, was at the top of the world. This made sense to them because that was the direction from which the Nile flowed. And since the Nile was so important to them, its source had to be at the top of the world. Kircher's map accepts the Egyptian concept that "south is up", as can be seen by his compass which points downwards. To re-establish our familiar "north is up" perspective, we have to turn the map upside down.

Kircher believed that this ancient Egyptian map represented Atlantis as an island in the North Atlantic Ocean between Spain and Africa on the right and America on the left (see figure 8). But what if Kircher got it wrong? What if the limited geographic knowledge that he had at his disposal caused him to locate Atlantis in the wrong place? Let's imagine that we have just excavated this ancient Egyptian map from beneath the paws of the Sphinx. It is our task to discover how it fits into our planet's geography. If we remove Kircher's labels and symbols we can see more clearly what he must have had at hand in 1665.

Here's what Kircher must have been working with (see figure 9). Now, if we search the globe for a place that might fit this configuration, we find a near-perfect match in a place where south would naturally be "up".

Here's Kircher's Egyptian map of Atlantis (see figure 10) compared to a modern geophysical globe showing south in the "up" position. The present shape of ice-free Antarctica as depicted in this modern view is based upon the current ocean level, not that of 9,600 BC. Atlantis did not actually sink beneath the waves: instead, as the old ice-caps melted, the ocean level rose, covering some of the continent's permutations. Further distortions in our modern map, compared to Kircher's, are a



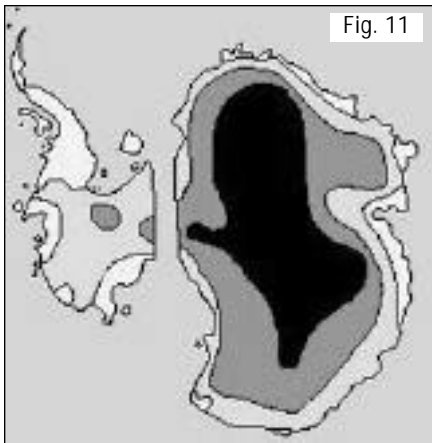


Fig. 11

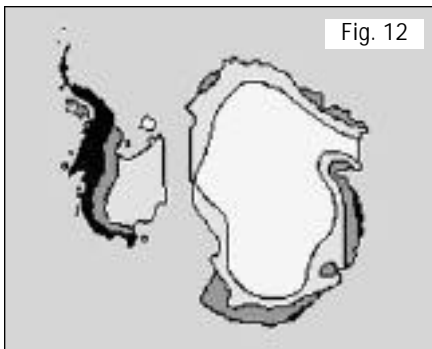


Fig. 12

result of the weight of today's Antarctic ice-sheet. This immense blanket of snow and ice depressed parts of the continent, causing more and more land to fall below ocean level. I believe that the Egyptian map of Atlantis represents in size, shape, scale and position, an ice-free Antarctica.

Now what I've shown you so far is something that I understood for the first time 20 years ago. Plato's account of Atlantis seemed like a crude depiction of the world as seen from Antarctica. I knew I was onto something, but

as I followed the research I encountered the Antarctic ice-cap!

In 1976, the encyclopaedias claimed confidently and absolutely that Antarctica has been under ice for 50 to 60 million years! Now it seemed to me that Plato's account had been amazingly accurate when it came to geography, so I decided to treat the question of the age of the Antarctic ice-sheet as an open rather than closed question. In 1990 I was rewarded when two geologists made a discovery that completely reopened the question of the age of the ice-sheet. Working just 250 miles from the South Pole, the geologists discovered the frozen remains of forest that was later dated to be between two and three million years old.

So it turns out that the encyclopaedias of 1976 were wrong by as much as 58 million years! The absolute, ancient age of the Antarctic ice-cap wasn't so absolute after all.

Most of the ice (nearly two-and-a-half miles thick) lies on what we know as "Greater Antarctica". Darker tones here (see figure 11) represent thicker ice-sheets. On "Lesser Antarctica", the side facing South America and the area corresponding to the island on the Kircher map, the ice-sheet is quite shallow.

I thought perhaps this curious phenomenon could be accounted for by a greater snowfall on Greater Antarctica, but when I turned to the snowfall patterns this is what I found. It's snowing like heck on Lesser Antarctica, the black areas (see figure 12), while over on Greater Antarctica, the area which holds nearly 90 per cent of the world's fresh water, there is virtually no annual snowfall. Greater Antarctica is a polar desert!

There is a dramatic anomaly here. The area of the greatest ice has the least snowfall, while the area of least ice receives the most snowfall. Current snowfall patterns could not produce the ice-sheet that we see today. In this case, the present is certainly not the key to the past. When I looked through the scientific literature trying to find an explanation for this anomaly, I found only silence. There was nothing to be found. Nobody seemed even curious about the fact that the greatest ice-sheet in the world does not have snow falling on it!

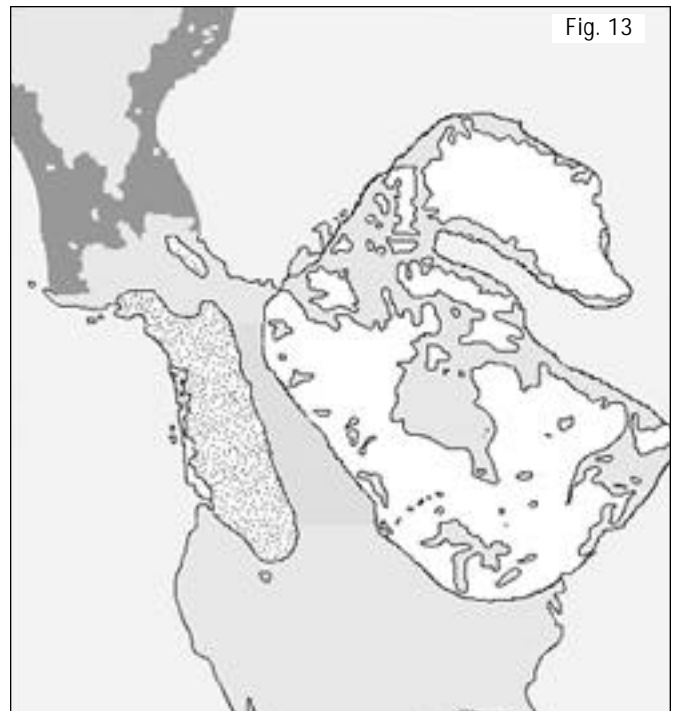


Fig. 13

And when I looked at the northern hemisphere I found a whole host of anomalies. To anyone who has ever visited a museum in North America, this is a familiar map depicting the Ice Age (see figure 13). This is what the continent looked like 12,000 years ago—the time of Atlantis, I might add.

We are told that the native people who first arrived in America came across a land-bridge some 12,000 years ago into a largely ice-free Alaska. From there they made their way through an ice-free corridor that existed between two massive ice-sheets. Notice that the Queen Charlotte Islands were ice-free at this time. This is the homeland of the Haida whose story of a lost city I will be telling later.

There are several problems with the traditional model for the peopling of America. New archaeological sites have been discovered in Chile, Brazil, Pennsylvania and New Mexico which are much older than 10,000 BC. Archaeologists have been slow to accept the implication of these sites: that the people of America have been on this continent long before 10,000 BC. Clearly, the traditional version of how and when people first arrived in America also needs to be re-opened.

Another problem is: why is this ice-free corridor right smack-dab between two massive ice-sheets? And why are the ice-sheets here at all? Why don't they extend to cover Siberia, Beringia and most of Alaska?

I had a lot of questions and I wasn't finding a lot of satisfactory answers in the scientific literature.

Then I read *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings* by Charles Hapgood and learned that Kircher's map was not alone. There were other ancient maps, including the famous Piri Re'is map, showing Antarctica without ice.

#### **About the Speaker:**

Rand Flem-Ath is co-author (with Rose Flem-Ath) of *When The Sky Fell: In Search of Atlantis*, published in 1995 by Stoddart Publishing (Ontario), Weidenfeld & Nicolson (London) and St Martin's Press (New York). (See review in NEXUS 3/01.)

Continued in the next issue of NEXUS...